INCOMING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE—DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

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OCT 7 - 1947
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FROM: Rome

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 3033, October 1, 1947, 7 p. m.

Commercial treaty No. 8. First joint examination of draft treaty with Italian delegation completed September 29. Additional meeting to be held this week for clarification of certain points. Summary of results of discussions not previously reported follows:

Articles 19, 21, 25, 26, 28, and present provisions of protocol accepted without change.

Article 20. Apparently acceptable but question raised by Italians whether their regulations as to transportation of emigrants may not be in conflict with paragraph 3. Further reference will be made to this in discussions.

Article 22. Italians state that they cannot agree to MFN treatment as to coasting trade and inland navigation. Present policy is to exclude foreign shipping. MFN objectionable for reason that number of old treaties grant right of participation to certain countries which have apparently seldom exercised rights and government wishes to make ostensibly reciprocal agreements with countries such as Yugoslavia and Albania which have no important shipping. Department requested send instructions on this point as soon as possible.

Article 23. Italians point out that under Italian laws and regulations stateless persons may be denied transit permits. Although

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8. Leadership

The week was a relatively quiet one among the members of the Soviet Union's top leadership. Khrushchev, installed at his vacation retreat in the Crimea, was busy making the King of Afghanistan feel at home. While there was no press mention of it, he was almost surely also talking with the GDR leaders, Walter Ulbricht and Willi Stoph, who stopped over in Kiev on August 1-3 on their way to the Crimea (see EXTERNAL).

Khrushchev and BREZHNEV met King Zahir when the royal party arrived at Simferopol on August 6, and paid a call on the King on August 7. On the 8th, the King was entertained at lunch by Khrushchev and his family, with Brezhnev among the guests.

MIKOYAN was also on public view, receiving the departing Syrian Ambassador, Rafik ASHA, on August 3, and the Vice President of Liberia, William Richard TOLBERT, on August 9.

The only other Presidium members whose whereabouts were reported were VORONOV and KIRILENKO, who, together with Chairman of the All-Union Agriculture Committee N. G. IGNATOV, took part in an August 6 meeting on problems of livestock-raising convened by the Central Committee of the Party.

While agriculture predictably continued to engage the Presidium's attention, two other problems were receiving growing attention.

There was nothing to suggest that the USSR was undergoing a "crime wave" of larger than normal proportions, but it seemed clear that there was an upsurge in efforts to combat crime (see below).

The press handling of the regime's decision to de-emphasize private housing construction and accentuate cooperative construction (see ECONOMIC WEEKA No. 32) provided grounds for the conclusion that the leadership considered this likely to add a measure of popular discontent to that already evoked by the June 1 meat-and-butter price rises.

The first report of the joint CC-Council of Ministers' decree on this subject came in the TASS English-language wire on June 19. So far as the Embassy is aware, the decree itself has never been published and no mention of it appeared in the Soviet press until August 7, when Pravda, in lieu of a leading editorial, ran an article describing it. Presumably publicization of the decree in June was deemed inexpedient in view of the June 1 announcement of the food-price rises.

The cautious and incomplete fashion in which the press handled the decree lends weight to the interpretation that it not only means intensified discouragement of private housing construction, but also increasing regime pressure to substitute cooperative financing of new housing for state financing.

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The prospect for the Soviet consumer becomes increasingly gloomy. Clothing has always been expensive in the USSR. Meat and butter now cost 25-30 percent more than they did before June 1. And now it appears that new housing, one of the regime's principal propaganda stand-bys, will come more and more out of the prospective tenants' pockets.

Small wonder that Pravda, on August 9, felt the time was ripe to remind the public of Khrushchev's words: "For our Party, there is no higher goal than constant care for Soviet people, their welfare, their happiness . . .". (UNCLASSIFIED)

9. Youth, Morality, and Crime

The Soviet Union publishes no regular crime statistics and the Embassy's unofficial tally of 75 death sentences since the first of the year (Embassy's A-214) is no substitute for J. Edgar HOOVER's Uniform Crime Reports (New York Times International Edition, August 2). There are indications, though, that if Soviet law-enforcement officials were permitted to issue comprehensive crime reports, they, too, would be voicing concern over juvenile delinquency and "a massive avalanche of crime."

The crime stories selectively published by the Soviet press for agitprop purposes have recently been bearing down heavily on drunkenness, rape, and murder. But these revelations are only a partial clue to the real situation. Even more significant are veiled admissions in Party meetings and publications.

On July 30, for instance, the Latvian CP and Komsomol sponsored a meeting of youth activists of the Republic (Sovetskaya Latviya, August 1). Latvian Komsomol secretary N. A. KARPOV told the meeting that "daily active work with young men and young women should take the main role in the education of our youth." He called for "a merciless struggle against survivals of the old life" and "the creation of public opinion about amoral manifestations." Meanwhile, a member of the Uzbek CP Bureau wrote in a Party periodical (Kommunist Uzbekistana, No. 7, July), "It is an unpleasant and disgraceful fact that among those arrested and convicted of crimes are even members of the Party and the Komsomol. It should be a matter of serious concern that among those convicted of crimes are a section of the youth in the 18-to-25 age bracket" (Embassy's A-215). He also noted that the first deputy procurator of the Uzbek Republic and the procurator of Tashkent Oblast had been fired for shielding economic criminals.

Finally, in Moscow, Pravda (August 7) reported that no first or second prize had been awarded in a contest for the best manuscript on "The Bases of Communist Morality." A jury acting on behalf of the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Social Sciences of the CC-CPSU, and the Publishing House of Political Literature, conferred only a third prize, plus two honorable mentions. (UNCLASSIFIED)

10. Further Confirmation of Trouble in Rostov Area

The Embassy has continued to receive superficially unrelated reports which, taken together, add credence to rumors of trouble during the first week of June in Novocherkassk, near Rostov-on-Don (Embassy's A-202).

Assorted tourists, several US farm delegations, and a group of US students have been kept from making scheduled visits to the area. The most frequent Soviet pretext for canceling travel arrangements has been the statement that Rostov is under quarantine.

Rostov and Novocherkassk newspapers on file in the Lenin Library contain an unusually strident propaganda campaign in support of the June 1 rise in meat and butter prices, a normal quota of Soviet tourist comings-and-goings that belies any possibility of health quarantine, and an indication that the first secretary of the Novocherkassk City Party Committee may have been replaced.

The pervasive and circumstantial nature of rumors current in Moscow and the scraps of evidence referred to above support the view that something was--and evidently still is--rotten in Rostov Oblast. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

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For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:

R. T. Davies
First Secretary of Embassy

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